

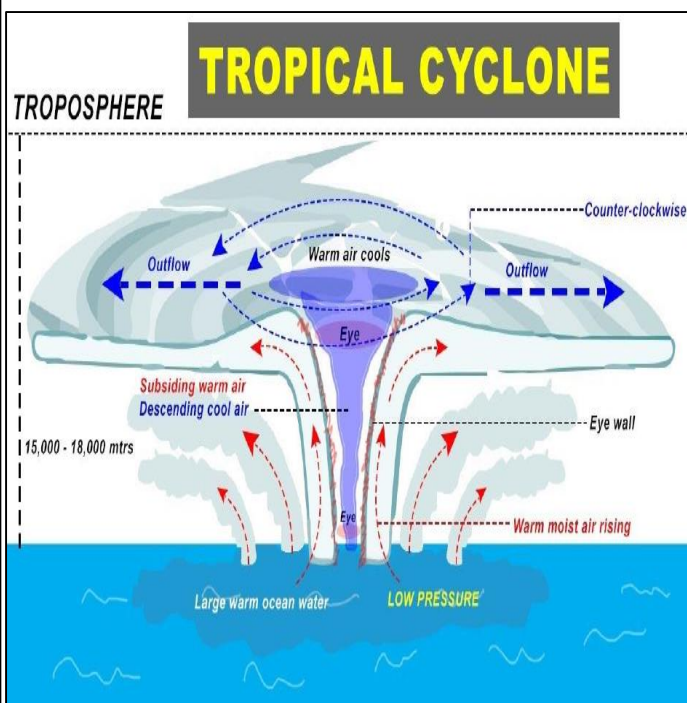
Cyclone Mocha

❖ Context

- **West Bengal and Odisha** are bracing for Cyclone Mocha, the first cyclone to hit the country in 2023, as the weather office has predicted **heavy rains and high-speed winds over the region in coming days.**
- The cyclonic storm will **move initially north-northwest to central Bay of Bengal** till May 11, 2023 and then re-curve and **move north-northeast towards Bangladesh-Myanmar coast.**

❖ Formation of Tropical Cyclone:

- Cyclones are a type of low-pressure environment with rapid inward air circulation.
- Tropical cyclones occur **near the equator** over warm ocean water.
- Usually, a high temperature anywhere means the existence of low-pressure air, and a low temperature means high-pressure wind.
- As **air gets warm** over hotter regions it **ascends**, leading to low pressure at the surface it is covering.
- When **air cools** in colder areas it **descends**, leading to high pressure at the surface.
- In a depression or low-pressure situation, the air rises and blows in an **anticlockwise direction** around the low in the **northern hemisphere** and in a **clockwise direction in the southern hemisphere.**
- This is because of the **Coriolis effect**, a result of the earth's rotation on its axis.
- As warm air rises and cools, water vapour **condenses to form clouds** and this can lead to rains.



- A tropical storm occurs when winds exceed 63 miles per hour, and a tropical cyclone or hurricane occurs when winds reach 119 miles per hour.
- Weather systems formed over the Bay of Bengal in the peak of summer in May are among the strongest in the North Indian Ocean region.

❖ Naming of the Tropical Cyclones:

- In 2000, a group of nations called **WMO/ESCAP** (World Meteorological Organization / United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) **decided to start naming cyclones in the region.**
 - This group of nations comprises **Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.**
- After each country sent in suggestions, the **WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) finalized the list.**
- The WMO/ESCAP expanded to include five more countries in 2018 - **Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.**
- The list of 169 cyclone names released by IMD in April 2020 were provided by these countries - 13 suggestions from each of the 13 countries.
- This cyclone will be named Mocha (Mokha), a name suggested by Yemen after the Red Sea port city, which is known to have introduced coffee to the world over 500 years ago.
- **Significance :**
 - It becomes **easier for people to remember**, as opposed to numbers and technical terms.
 - It is **easy to identify individual cyclones, create awareness of its development, and rapidly disseminate warnings** to increase community preparedness.
- **Side Note :**
 - Local Name of Cyclone :
 - Hurricanes – In the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific.
 - Typhoons – In Southeast Asia.
 - Cyclone - In the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific around Australia.

Title 42

❖ Context

- The United States is getting ready to lift COVID-19 restrictions that have blocked migrants caught at the U.S.-Mexico border from seeking asylum since 2020, a **major policy shift with humanitarian and political implications.**



❖ About Title 42:

- The COVID restrictions, known as **Title 42**, were first implemented under Republican then-President **Donald Trump in March 2020** at the beginning of the pandemic.
- At the time, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said the order was needed to **stem the spread of the coronavirus** in crowded detention settings.

- Title 42 allowed border agents to **rapidly expel many migrants to Mexico.**
- Some public health experts, Democrats and advocates criticized its health justification, saying it was part of Trump's goal of curbing legal and illegal immigration.
- Since its inception, migrants have been **expelled more than 2.7 million times under Title 42.**

Face to Face Centres

Arab League

❖ Context

- Recently, the Arab League voted to **reinstate Syria's membership after its suspension more than 10 years ago**, underlining the thawing relations between Damascus and other Arab countries.
- Syria was ousted from the Arab League in 2011 following President Bashar al-Assad's brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protests, which led to the ongoing civil war in the country.

❖ Arab League:

- The Arab League, formally known as the League of Arab States, was **established with initially just six nations: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.**
- It was **formed in Cairo on March 22, 1945**, following adoption of the **Alexandria Protocol in 1944.**
- **Administration Center** : Cairo, Egypt.
- Currently, it has **22 member states**, who have pledged to cooperate on economic and military affairs, among other issues.
- The League makes decisions on a majority basis, but there is no mechanism to compel members to comply with resolutions.
- Each member has **one vote on the League Council**, decisions being binding only on those states that have voted for them. It has been criticised for its internal conflicts and collective inaction on important international issues.



Ecuadorian Bonds in a Debt-for-Nature Swap

❖ Context

- Credit Suisse, a Swiss bank, has purchased \$1.6 billion worth of Ecuadorian bonds in a debt-for-nature swap.



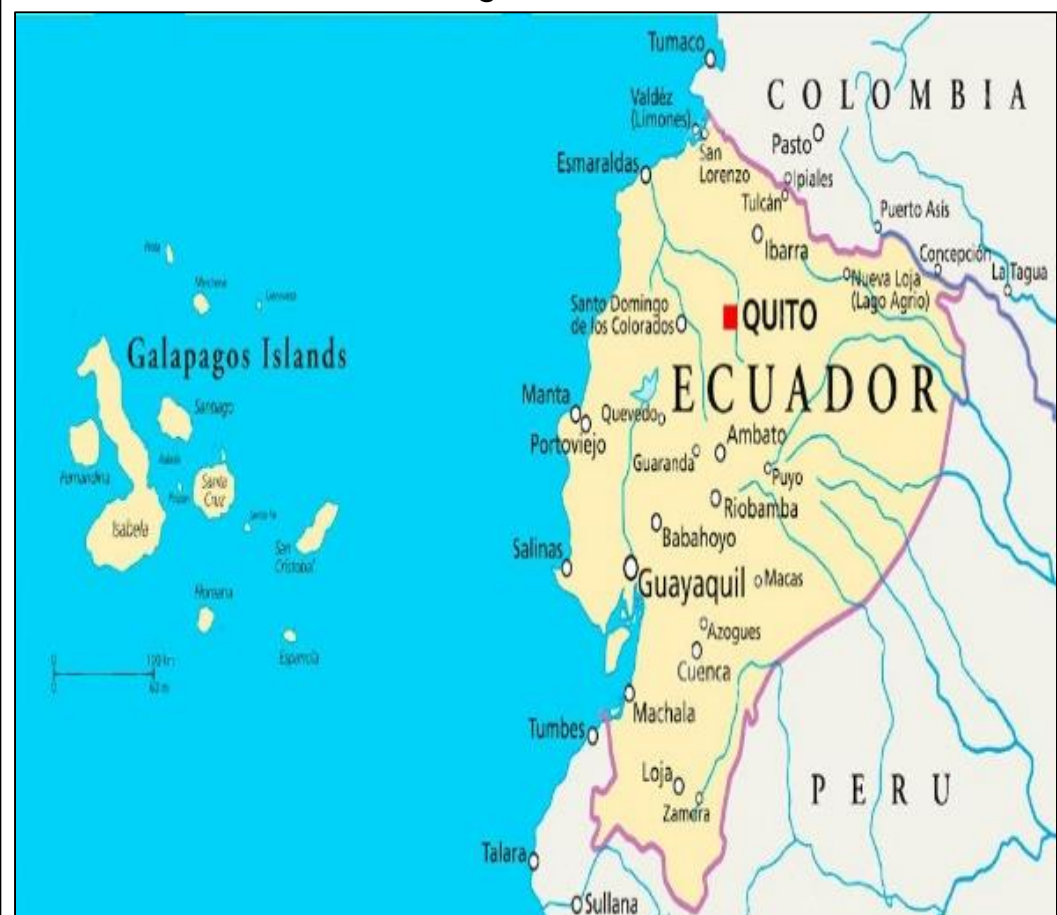
❖ Key Highlights:

- This agreement commits Ecuador to spend \$18 million annually for the next 20 years on conservation efforts in the **Galapagos Islands**, a UNESCO world heritage site known for its unique ecosystem and its importance in Charles Darwin's research on evolution.
- The swap was completed at a cost of \$644 million, less than half the original value of the bonds.

❖ About Galapagos Islands:

- The Galapagos Islands, officially known as the **Archipiélago de Colón**, are a group of volcanic islands situated in the **Pacific Ocean**.
- They are part of the country of Ecuador and are located about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) off its coast.
- The archipelago consists of **18 main islands, 3 smaller islands, and 107 rocks and islets.**
- The Galapagos Islands are renowned for their unique and diverse ecosystems, which have played a significant role in the **field of evolutionary biology.**
- The islands boast a remarkable array of plant and animal species, many of which are endemic and found nowhere else on Earth.
- These include the iconic **Galapagos giant tortoises, marine iguanas, flightless cormorants, Galapagos penguins**, and various species of Darwin's finches, among others.

- The marine life surrounding the islands is equally extraordinary, with diverse marine species, including **hammerhead sharks, sea turtles, and colorful fish.**
- Due to their exceptional biodiversity and pristine ecosystems, the Galapagos Islands were declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1978.



Face to Face Centres



Territorial Army



❖ Context

- Recently, the Union Ministry of Defence amended the cadre management provisions for women officers in the Territorial Army.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The amendment allows women officers to be posted along the Line of Control (LOC) and expands their career opportunities within the organization.
- The **Territorial Army (TA)** was established in **1948** as a replacement for the Indian Defence Force and the Indian Territorial Force.
- The TA is led by a **Lieutenant General-ranking officer** and falls under the supervision of the **Chief of Defence Staff**. It consists of two units: a departmental unit comprising ex-servicemen and public sector undertakings, and a non-departmental unit consisting of privately employed citizens.
- The TA's primary role is to relieve the **regular army from monotonous duties** and assist civil administration during natural calamities and essential services maintenance.

- It also provides units to the regular army when needed and has actively participated in **various wars and operations**. Women officers were first enlisted in the **Territorial Army in 2019** and initially assigned to ecological task force units, **TA oil sector units, and TA railway engineer regiments**.

❖ Significance of This Amendment:

- The recent amendment **expands the role of women officers**, allowing them to be posted with engineer regiments along the Line of Control.
- Women officers can also serve as staff officers at TA Group Headquarters/Directorate General of Territorial Army in New Delhi, based on organizational requirements.
- This amendment is a significant step **towards gender equality** in the military and enhances the career prospects of women officers in the Territorial Army.

Democratic Republic of Congo

❖ Context

- The number of fatalities resulting from recent flooding and landslides in the Democratic Republic of Congo has now reached a minimum of 401.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Location:** The DRC is situated in the heart of Africa and shares borders with several countries including **Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan**.
- **Capital:** **Kinshasa**, located on the banks of the Congo River. It is the largest city in the country and serves as its political, administrative, and economic center.
- **History:** The DRC gained independence from **Belgium** on June 30, 1960.
- **Natural Resources:** The DRC is rich in natural resources, including vast mineral deposits such as **copper, cobalt, gold, diamonds, and coltan**.

- **Wildlife and Environment:** It is known for its unique biodiversity, including endangered species like the mountain gorillas in **Virunga National Park**.



- **Important Rivers:** Congo River, M'pozo River, Ubangi River, Kasai River.
- **Important Lakes:** The Democratic Republic of Congo is home to several important lakes, including Lakes **Albert, Edward, Kivu, Tanganyika, and Mweru**.
- **Highest Mountain:** The highest mountain in the Democratic Republic of Congo is **Mt. Stanley**, located in the **Ruwenzori Range**.

News in Between the Lines

Kali Tiger Reserve



❖ Context

- The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** has requested a status report concerning an illicit resort located in the central area of the Uttara Kannada (North Canara) district in Karnataka, India.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The region was previously recognized as the **Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve**, consisting of the Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary and Anshi National Park, both situated **within the Western Ghats**. The majestic Kali River flows through this area.
- The flora in the reserve includes a variety of species such as **bintangur, Calophyllum wightianum, Malabar tamarind, Garcinia morella, and more**.

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Bluesky



❖ Context

➤ Recently, Bluesky has come to the fore as a potential claimant to Twitter's throne.

❖ Bluesky:

- Bluesky is a micro-blogging platform and social web built on the **AT Protocol (Authenticated Transport Protocol)**.
- Bluesky might be classified as a Twitter competitor due to its founding team but is different in terms of its structure, as it is meant to form part of a decentralised ecosystem.
- **Users of apps built on the AT Protocol would be able to move between platforms without losing their followers, media, work, and data.**
- This account portability, as the feature is called, is a major part of the AT Protocol's structure.
- Bluesky says its founding mission is to "develop and drive large-scale adoption of technologies for open and decentralized public conversation."

Samarth Ramdas



❖ Context

➤ Jaggi Vasudev is the latest figure to have found himself at the centre of controversy by claiming that **Saint Samarth Ramdas was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's "guru."**

❖ About Samarth Ramdas:

- Samarth Ramdas (circa 1608 – 1681), also known as Sant Ramdas or Ramdas Swami, was a **Hindu saint, philosopher, poet, writer and spiritual master.**
- A **devotee of Lord Ram and Hanuman**, he toured the entire Indian subcontinent for 12 years, during which he came across various spiritual teachers and diverse religious traditions.
- Ramdas has **influenced Hindu nationalist thinkers** across the years.
- The likes of **Lokmanya Tilak, RSS founder KB Hedgewar, and VD Savarkar**, all claimed to have been inspired by the 17th century saint.
- His paean to **Lord Hanuman, Maruti Stotra**, is still commonly recited by school children as well as wrestlers akhadas across Maharashtra.

Orinoco Crocodile



❖ Context

➤ Venezuela's Orinoco Crocodile is on the brink of extinction.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Known to scientists as **Crocodylus intermedius**, the enormous reptile is native to the Orinoco basin that Venezuela shares with Colombia.
- It can grow to more than six meters (19.7 feet) in length and over 400 kilograms (882 pounds), making it one of the largest crocodiles in the world.
- According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, it is **critically endangered**, having suffered an 80% population reduction in just 3-generations in the early and mid-1900s.

Sovereignty



❖ Context

➤ Recently, PM of India alleged that leaders of a political party has been "openly advocating" Karnataka's secession from the Indian Union and they want to protect the "sovereignty" of Karnataka.

❖ Meaning of 'Sovereignty':

Sovereignty is simply the idea of having supreme authority over a defined territory.

- From the 17th century onwards, Western philosophers used the concept to describe the supremacy of the state - along with its institutions such as the government, the judiciary, and parliament - over the people being governed.
- **'Sovereignty' in Indian Constitution:** The word sovereignty **appears in the beginning of the Preamble** to the Constitution of India, as the first attribute of the independent republic of India.
 - Its placement as the first among the core principles of the republic underlines its importance in the Constitution.
 - **Fundamental Duties- Article 51A(c)** states that it is the duty of all citizens "to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India."
 - It is also mentioned in the **oaths** for positions like the Chief Justices, Union Ministers and Members of Parliament under the Third schedule.

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